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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences of volunteers and the development of relationships within the two largest contingents of one-on-one mentoring programs: community-based programs and school-based programs. The emphases of school-based programs were studied, along with the quality of developed relationships between youth and mentors and the benchmarks programs can use to ensure optimal development of supportive relationships. A survey was completed by 1,101 mentors in 98 mentoring programs. Mentors in school-based programs were found to spend more time working on academics or doing homework with their mentees. Mentors in school-based programs were of many ages, but mentors in community-based programs were almost all aged 22 to 49. School-based programs delivered fewer contact hours but were also slightly less expensive to conduct. Over 90% of mentors in both types of programs said that they felt close to their mentees, but more community-based mentors felt "very close" to their mentees. Nine factors that provide benchmarks of developing relationships were: (1) engaging in social activities; (2) engaging in academic activities; (3) number of hours per month spent together; (4) decision-making shared by mentor and mentee; (5) prematch training; (6) postmatch training; (7) mentor screening (only important relationship development in community-based programs); (8) matching; and (9) age of the mentee. Results suggest that a school-based approach to providing disadvantaged youth with volunteer mentors is a promising complement to the traditional community-based mentoring model. Practices that facilitate the development of mentor-mentee relationships are reviewed. Appendixes contain a list of members of the Public Policy Council of the National Mentoring Partnership and a discussion of study methodology. (Contains 10 tables and 20 references.) (SLD)

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Mentoring School-Age Children:

Relationship Development in Community-Based and School-Based Programs

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with
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P/PV

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Relationship Development in Community-Based and School-Based Programs

Prepared for the National Mentoring Partnership's Public Policy Council

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement

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April 2000

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The Public Policy Council of The National Mentoring Partnership has been involved with the project from its inception. Members of the project's advisory committee—LaVerne Alexander, Kristen Anderson, Paul Bardack, Ann Ensinger, Nancy Henkin, Jim Kooler, Susan Ladner, Jerry Lapham, Tom McKenna, Jacqueline Rhoden-Trader, Jay Smink, James Waller and Susan Weinberger—have been helpful throughout the processes of data collection, analysis and report development.

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Executive Summary

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Recent research has highlighted the positive effects of mentoring, the most significant and well-documented of which are improvements in youth's grades, school attendance and family relationships, and the prevention of drug and alcohol initiation (Johnson, 1998; LoSciuto et al., 1996; Tierney and Grossman, 1995). Given the powerful benefits that supportive mentoring relationships can provide youth, and the number of youth who need this kind of support, mentoring programs have begun to expand on a national level.

To investigate this expansion, Public/Private Ventures undertook a two-part study, conducted at the request of The National Mentoring Partnership's Public Policy Council and funded by the U.S. Department of Education. In the first study, *Mentoring School-Age Children: A Classification of Programs*, we surveyed 722 mentoring programs nationwide and found a rapidly growing and changing mentoring field, with tremendous growth in both traditional community-based programs and in newer "site-based" or "place-based" programs (most of which are based in schools). And although many of these programs (40%) had been operating for less than five years, the majority met infrastructure benchmarks that characterize quality programming.

Although this study provided important information about expansion and infrastructure, it did not focus on relationship development within these programs. Previous research suggests links between infrastructure and relationship development (Furano et al., 1993; Tierney and Branch, 1992), but we cannot assume from our findings in the first study that high-quality relationships are developing in these programs.

Understanding whether these programs are fostering strong mentoring relationships is important because research suggests that closer, more supportive mentoring relationships are more likely to make positive changes in youth's lives (Grossman and Johnson, 1999). Thus, prior to costly evaluations of these mentoring programs, it is important to determine whether they are creating the types of relationships that have been found to have the greatest impact on youth.

Therefore, the second study, the subject of this report, explores volunteers' experiences and relationship development within the two largest contingents of one-on-one mentoring programs: community-based programs and school-based programs (in which mentors and youth meet only at school). We addressed three sets of questions:

(1) **What is school-based mentoring?** Community-based programs have a longer track record and a more solid research foundation than do school-based programs. Therefore, we investigated how the emphases of school-based programs differ from those of the better-known, traditional, community-based model and examine implications for programming, operations and interactions between mentors and youth.

(2) **Are enough mentors in both types of programs developing the close, supportive relationships with youth that signify the potential of these programs to make a difference in the youth's lives?** We focus on three aspects of relationship quality—closeness, emotional support and instrumental support—because research suggests that they are related to the length of the match and the mentor's potential to make positive changes in the lives of youth (Grossman and Johnson, 1999; DuBois and Neville, 1997; Morrow and Styles, 1995; Freedman, 1988).

(3) **What specific benchmarks can programs use to ensure optimal development of supportive relationships, and do these critical levels differ for community-based and school-based programs?** This final question concerns the need to establish programmatic benchmarks and standards to help ensure that the expansion of mentoring continues to promote high-quality relationships.

Programming, Operations and Relationship Development in School-Based and Community-Based Programs

Mentors in community-based and school-based programs receive the same amount of prematch training and postmatch training and support. But school-based programs have implemented many programmatic changes to the traditional model that reduce costs, draw in adults who would not typically mentor and emphasize school success.

Program focus. Comparing the two program types, we found that mentors in school-based programs spend more time working on academics or doing homework with their mentees, who are more often selected based on their lack of school success. School-based mentors also have more contact with teachers and feel more effective in influencing their mentee's educational achievement. In community-based programs, mentors spend more time engaging in social activities, have more contact with parents and feel more effective in influencing their mentee's social behavior.

Mentor characteristics. Mentors in community-based programs are overwhelmingly 22 to 49 years of age, whereas those in school-based programs span the age spectrum. And although mentors in both types of programs are mainly Caucasian, school-based programs attract more minority mentors.

Program cost and staffing. School-based programs deliver half the number of mentor-mentee contact hours than do community-based programs (6 per month compared with 12). However, they are also significantly less expensive per youth ($567 compared with $1,369 annually), even when adding the value of in-kind school contributions. School-based programs also have fewer full-time staff.

Program operations. Community-based matches meet when and where the youth and/or mentor choose and spend two to three hours a week together for at least one full year. Matching is often same-gender and mentors and youth decide jointly on the activities they will engage in. School-based matches meet only at school for one or two hours a week during the academic year, are supervised by program or school staff, and focus more on school success. Cross-gender matching is more common in school-based programs and mentors are less likely to share interests with their mentees, suggesting fewer interest-based matching practices in school-based programs.

Location and supervision. Interactions between mentors and youth in school-based programs are supervised. Supervised interactions may not permit as much spontaneity or variety as do community-based meetings. However, meeting at the school also has distinct advantages: it offers mentors a safe location for meeting with their mentees, reduces their out-of-pocket costs, reduces the time- and cost-consuming rigor of mentor screening required by unsupervised meetings, and reduces the length of the commitment mentors must make. On-site supervision also decreases the need for same-gender matching—a major plus: because there is a shortage of male mentors, cross-gender matches means more mentors for boys.

Relationship quality. Over 90 percent of mentors in both community-based and school-based programs said they feel "close" to their mentees. Similar proportions of mentors in both types of programs reported being emotionally and instrumentally supportive of their mentees. At the highest level of closeness, however, we did find that more community-based mentors reported feeling "very close" to their mentees than did school-based mentors (45% versus 32%, respectively). The significance of this difference vis-a-vis outcomes is not yet known.

Benchmarks Indicating Effective Programming

We tested the importance of several factors in determining relationship quality in community-based and school-based programs. Despite their operational and programmatic differences, eight of the nine factors that we identified as important, are important for *both* community-based and school-based programs. The eight factors that are consistently related to mentors' reports of relationship quality in both types of programs are: engaging in social and academic activities, the amount of time spent together, how decisions are made about activities, similarity in mentor and youth interests, prematch and postmatch training and support, and age of the mentee. A ninth factor, screening, was related to relationship quality only in community-based programs.

Engaging in social activities. Previous research indicates that the strength of the bond that forms between mentor and youth governs the degree of impact their relationship will have, and that engaging in friendship-based activities is a key component of relationships that endure long enough for a bond to form. Further, research shows that in mentoring with instrumental goals, such as building career knowledge, social activities are equally as influential and do not detract from the conveyance of information and knowledge by the mentor. Youth benefit academically simply from having an adult pay attention to and spend time with them.

Our findings support this research. Relative to all the other variables we examined, the extent to which youth and mentors engage in social activities is the strongest contributing factor for both community-based and school-based programs in all three measures of positive relationship quality: closeness, emotional and instrumental supportiveness.

Engaging in academic activities. Regardless of whether mentors engage in social activities, those mentors who engage in academic activities (i.e., work on academics or do homework) with their mentee reported slightly higher levels of closeness and instrumental supportiveness than those who do not. Engaging in academic activities, however, was not related to emotional supportiveness.

Number of hours per month youth and mentors meet. Not surprisingly, mentors who spend more time with youth feel more close and supportive in their relationships. However, when examined in conjunction with other measures, the amount of time spent together was not as strong a predictor of relationship quality as were the types of activities youth and mentors engage in when they meet (in particular, engagement in social activities).

Decision-making. Again, our findings in this research are similar to those from earlier studies: the strongest relationships are formed when the mentor takes a "developmental" rather than a "prescriptive" approach, allowing the mentee to take the lead and share in making activity decisions. In the current study, we asked mentors in both community-based and school-based programs how decisions about activities were made. Mentors who reported close, supportive relationships also indicated that decisions were made together. Regardless of whether the program is school-based or community-based, the least positive relationships were those in which decisions about activities were made primarily by the mentor or established in advance by the program.

Prematch training. Prematch orientation and training is also associated with close and supportive relationships. Those mentors who attended fewer than two hours of prematch orientation or training reported the lowest levels of relationship quality, whereas those attending six or more hours of training reported having the strongest relationships with youth.

Postmatch training and support. Mentors who received more postmatch training and support (at least once a month) also tended to spend more hours per month with their mentees, and thus had stronger relationships.

Mentor screening. The findings on the importance of screening for relationship development are mixed. While we found that screening *is* related to relationship development in community-based programs, the extent of screening is *not* related to the strength of the relationships that develop in school-based programs, nearly half of which use the least stringent screening practices. We conclude that as long as school-based programs continue to provide adequate postmatch training and support, their less stringent screening practices may be acceptable. However, it is important to note that, regardless of its association with relationship development, some screening is critical for all mentoring programs, especially for programs without constant supervision of matches.

Matching. From the mentors' perspective, cross-ethnic matches are as close and supportive as same-ethnic matches. In addition, same-gender matches do not differ from cross-gender matches in closeness and supportiveness. However, mentors who share interests with their mentees have stronger relationships than those who do not, emphasizing the importance of matching on the basis of similar interests. In fact, after social activities, sharing similar interests is the second most important contributor to feelings of closeness and supportiveness on the part of the mentor.

Age of the mentee. Mentors whose mentees are in middle or high school experience relationships with their mentees as less close and less supportive than do mentors of youth in elementary school. This finding may be explained, in part, by our finding that older youth are less likely to share similar interests with their mentor (previously discussed as a contributor to positive relationships). Also, mentors may feel less competent relating to older youth and may need more training to meet this challenge.

Conclusions and Implications for Practice

Our results suggest that a school-based approach to providing disadvantaged youth with volunteer mentors provides a promising complement to the traditional community-based model. School-based mentors report relationships with youth that are similar in quality to those observed among mentors in community-based programs.

Although we do not yet have information on the benefits to youth of participating in school-based programs, the formation of positive relationships is the first step toward achieving impacts and our finding that such relationships *are* formed in school-based programs would make them good choices for investment by programs that have the following priorities:

- Serving youth with school-related needs, particularly those in elementary school;
- Attracting volunteers able to make only limited commitments of time and resources;
- Attracting older adults, youth and minorities as volunteer mentors; and
- Keeping program costs low.

On the other hand, well-implemented community-based programs yield a wide range of benefits for youth that may not be realized in school-based programs. In the absence of impact data, however, we can only speculate about the likely benefits for youth in school-based mentoring programs.

Program Practices that Facilitate Relationship Development

While both school-based and community-based programs can provide settings in which mentors and youth develop close and supportive relationships, maximizing the strength of those relationships requires that specific program practices be implemented:

- Serious consideration of youth's and volunteer's interests, by matching based on interests or training on how to draw out similar interests;
- At least six hours of prematch training for mentors and at least monthly contact with program staff when a match's meetings are under way;
- Encouraging mentors to spend time engaging in social as well as academic activities; and
- Focusing more attention on training and supporting mentors who are working with older youth.

In conclusion, we emphasize that this report focuses on relationship development not program impacts. Given the findings reported here, and the push toward serving an increasing number of youth through school-based models, a systematic evaluation of program impacts is not only warranted but imperative if mentoring is to continue its growth as an important strategy within the youth development field.

School-based models include features that make them more attractive to some volunteers and may better meet the needs of particular youth. But school-based programs may not be appropriate for youth with needs that extend beyond the focus of these programs or for volunteers requiring less structure to be successful. Assuming that results from an impact study corroborate our current findings in support of school-based mentoring, a community's best strategy would be to support several mentoring programs of different types. With a range of programs to choose from, mentors and youth can be referred to those most appropriate to their needs, schedules and interests.

Introduction

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Recent research has highlighted the positive effects of mentoring, the most significant and well-documented of which are improvements in youth's grades, school attendance and family relationships, and the prevention of drug and alcohol initiation (Johnson, 1998; LoSciuto et al., 1996; Tierney and Grossman, 1995). At the heart of these effects is the development of a strong relationship between mentor and youth; research suggests that closer, more supportive mentoring relationships are more likely to make positive changes in youth's lives (Grossman and Johnson, 1999).

Given the powerful benefits that supportive mentoring relationships can provide youth, and the number of youth who need this kind of support, mentoring programs have begun to expand on a national level. This expansion can be seen both in the creation of new programs and in efforts of existing programs to serve additional youth (Branch and Arbreton, forthcoming). At the 1997 President's Summit on Youth, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) committed to doubling in size by 2003. BBBSA and other agencies are pursuing such goals, in part, by stretching the traditional definitions of mentoring and implementing several innovative approaches.

To track and better understand this expansion, Public/Private Ventures undertook a two-part study, conducted at the request of The National Mentoring Partnership's Public Policy Council (see Appendix A) and funded by the U.S. Department of Education. In the first report from this research, *Mentoring School-Age Children: A Classification of Programs*, we surveyed 722 mentoring programs to outline the range of mentoring programs that exist on a national level—their goals, structure, infrastructure, and the general characteristics of volunteers and youth served.

We found rapid growth of the mentoring field: 40 percent of the programs surveyed had been operating for less than five years. In addition to growth among traditional community-based mentoring programs, we also found tremendous growth in "site-based" or "place-based" programs. Unlike community-based mentoring in which youth and mentors decide between themselves when and where to meet, place-based matches meet only during regularly scheduled sessions at a specific location, including schools, youth organizations and businesses. Among those programs surveyed, almost half (47%) are place-based, with most (72%) located in schools (i.e., "school-based" programs). Community-based and school-based programs are thus the most predominant mentoring models represented in our sample.

When the mentoring movement first gathered momentum in the late 1980s, many programs failed to establish infrastructure sufficient to support the growing number of mentoring relationships. Our survey uncovered quite a different story today. Although aspects of infrastructure vary across the programs in our sample, the majority meet benchmarks that characterize quality programming. That is, most subject potential volunteers to a rigorous screening process; more than half provide their mentors with two or more hours of training prior to meeting with youth; more than 80 percent support their mentors through at least monthly contact; and 60 percent offer their mentors the opportunity to participate in mentor support groups.

Although the first study provided important information about infrastructure, it did not focus on relationship development within these programs. Previous research suggests links between infrastructure and relationship development (Furano et al., 1993; Tierney and Branch, 1992), but we cannot assume from our findings in the first study that high-quality relationships are developing in these programs. And although research supports the effectiveness of the traditional model, school-based programs have a shorter track record and have only recently been the focus of any research (e.g., Curtis and Hansen-Schwoebel, forthcoming; Herrera, 1999). Thus, we know very little about the development of relationships in school-based programs.

Funders and policymakers are left with difficult choices about how to invest limited resources. And practitioners, in and out of the school setting, want to know about effective practices for expansion and how to support high-quality relationships.

Study Issues

Thus, the focus of this report—the second in this series of studies on Mentoring School-Age Children—is to better understand volunteers' experiences and relationship development within the two largest types of one-on-one mentoring programs: community-based and school-based (i.e., only those place-based programs meeting at school).

We address three fundamental sets of questions:

(1) **What is school-based mentoring?** How do its programmatic emphases differ from those of the better-known, traditional, community-based model, and what implications do these differences have for programming, operations and interactions between mentors and youth?

(2) **Are enough mentors in both types of programs developing the close, supportive relationships with youth that signify the potential of these programs to make a difference in the youth's lives?** We consider three aspects of relationship quality—closeness, emotional support and instrumental support (focused on providing help to develop skills or reach goals)—because research suggests that they are related to the length of the match and the mentor's potential to make positive changes in the lives of youth (Grossman and Johnson, 1999; DuBois and Neville, 1997; Morrow and Styles, 1995; Freedman, 1988). Close, supportive relationships may also keep mentors engaged, involved and satisfied with their experience in the program (Morrow and Styles, 1995). These variables may thus have important relevance for mentors' experiences within the program, and ultimately their ability to affect youth.

(3) **What specific benchmarks can programs use to ensure optimal development of supportive relationships, and do these critical levels differ for community-based and school-based programs?** This final question concerns the need to establish programmatic benchmarks and standards to help ensure that the expansion of mentoring continues to promote high-quality relationships. Past research guided our efforts to address this question, by suggesting a number of variables that may be important in creating supportive relationships between mentors and youth, and ultimately in affecting impact. These variables include: efforts to match youth with mentors based on similarity (Ensher and Murphy, 1997); the amount of time mentors spend with youth (Grossman and Johnson, 1999; DuBois and Neville, 1997); the activities youth and mentors engage in (McClanahan, 1998; DuBois and Neville, 1997); the quality of interactions between mentors and youth and how decisions are made in their relationship (Morrow and Styles, 1995); and screening, training and ongoing supervision (Sipe, 1996; Furano et al., 1993; Tierney and Branch, 1992).

Although previous research has stressed the importance of these variables, few studies have provided specific benchmarks to guide effective program implementation. These benchmarks are important because they enable funders and practitioners to weigh a program's potential without having to submit it to an extensive, costly evaluation. Some standards have been determined (see, for example, those identified in *Mentoring: Elements of Effective Practice* developed by The National Mentoring Working Group, convened by United Way of America and The National Mentoring Partnership, 1991; and *Mentoring: A Synthesis of P/PV's Research: 1988-1995*). However, much of this work was based on traditional community-based mentoring programs. Furthermore, these benchmarks have been determined by practical experience, observation and research on a small number of programs.

The findings presented here, thus, represent the first attempt to systematically assess the importance of these factors across a large number of school-based and community-based programs, and to provide benchmarks that practitioners can use to assess the effectiveness of their programs in fostering strong relationships.

Overview of Study Methodology and Findings

To address these three sets of questions, we conducted telephone interviews with mentors from a subsample of programs involved in our original 1997 program survey. 1,101 mentors in 98 mentoring programs completed the survey (see Appendix B for more details about the sample). Among those, we focused on the 669 volunteers who were in one-on-one matches in community- and school-based programs. We supplemented these data with interviews and focus groups conducted with youth, school and agency staff from eight exemplary programs (see Appendix B for more details).

We believe that these initial findings provide evidence that both community-based and school-based mentoring programs have the potential to foster successful mentoring relationships and, ultimately, have positive impacts on youth.

In addressing the first two questions, we found that the two program models provide the same amount of prematch training and postmatch support to their mentors, although school-based programs tend to screen less rigorously than do community-based programs. And although mentors from the two program models differ in a number of respects (such as how much time they spend with youth, what they do with youth when they are together, and who makes decisions regarding their activities), fairly close, supportive relationships were developing in the majority of matches in both community-based and school-based programs: at least 90 percent of mentors from both types of programs reported that they provide emotional support to their mentees; the same was true for instrumental help and closeness. At the highest level of closeness, however, more community-based mentors reported feeling "very close" to their mentees than did school-based mentors.

We believe that these initial findings provide evidence that both community-based and school-based mentoring programs have the potential to foster successful mentoring relationships and, ultimately, have positive impacts on youth. However, in both types of programs, we saw room for improvement, suggesting that programs could benefit from specific benchmarks to help guide efforts to strengthen the development of mentoring relationships.

Analyses to determine these benchmarks, and address our third question, suggest that the following are key variables in fostering the development of close, supportive mentoring relationships across both school-based and community-based one-on-one programs: pretraining and ongoing support and supervision; amount of time spent together; engaging in social and academic activities; allowing youth to contribute to decision-making; and ensuring that youth and mentors share similar interests. The age of youth being mentored is also associated with relationship quality. Our analyses enabled us to identify the levels of these factors associated with the closest, most supportive relationships. For the most part, these threshold levels are identical across both types of programs.

Organization of the Report

In the next chapter, we describe the characteristics of school-based and community-based programs, their mentors, the youth they serve, and the relationships that develop in these programs. We also discuss the implications of these characteristics. The third chapter presents our findings regarding program characteristics and practices most conducive to fostering effective mentoring relationships, discussing key factors that are consistently related to strong relationship development across both school-based and community-based one-on-one programs. We also provide benchmarks for practices that foster the development of the closest, most supportive relationships. The final chapter includes a discussion of questions for future research and implications of the findings presented here.

School-Based and Community-Based Mentoring: Implications for Program Goals, Operations and Relationship Development

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A long history of research and practice has provided extensive knowledge about the goals and characteristics of the more traditional, community-based (CB) mentoring program model. In contrast, because school-based (SB) programs are newer, less information is available to describe how they function and achieve their relationship goals. The expansion of mentoring and the predominance of SB programs in this expansion underscores the importance of understanding more about SB programs.

Therefore, this chapter uses information from mentor and program surveys to describe SB programs by illustrating similarities with and differences from the more familiar CB programs. We start with an examination of differences in program focus and operations. These descriptions are provided as a context for understanding the potential for mentors and youth to form positive relationships in both types of programs.

Program Differences Between Community- and School-Based Models

SB programs developed as part of two concurrent trends—the national school reform movement and a rapidly expanding mentoring field. As part of these trends, school-based programs have implemented several changes to the traditional CB model of mentoring. Our analyses suggest that these changes have important implications for a number of program characteristics including program focus, mentor characteristics and program costs. Figure 1 provides an overview of these key differences.

Figure 1
Overview of Program Differences Between School-Based and Community-Based Mentoring Programs

School-Based	Community-Based
Program focus	
• Engage in more academic activities	• Engage in more social activities
• Have more contact with youth's teacher	• Have more contact with youth's parent
• Feel more effective in affecting school outcomes	• Feel more effective in affecting social outcomes
• Serve more youth who are having problems in school, and are more likely to serve youth who have been held back in school	• Are more likely to serve delinquent youth
Mentor characteristics	
• Attract and/or target more older adult and youth mentors	• Attract and/or target more 22- to 49-year-old mentors
• Attract and/or target more minority mentors	• Attract more Caucasian mentors
Cost and staffing	
• Cost less per match	• Cost more per match
• Use fewer full-time staff	• Use more full-time staff

Program Focus

Although there is no dispute that forming a solid relationship between a youth and a caring adult is a central goal of all mentoring programs, several characteristics of SB programs suggest that they place greater emphasis, or focus, on school success than do CB programs. For example, Table 1 shows that SB matches spend more of their time together engaging in academic activities (i.e., working on academics or doing homework), whereas CB matches spend more time engaging in social activities. Although youth and mentors in SB programs spend much less time in social activities, it is important to note that they do spend almost as much time as do CB matches talking about personal issues or problems, which is one component of social activities (62% of SB and 71% of

The expansion of mentoring and the predominance of school-based programs in this expansion underscores the importance of understanding more about school-based programs.

Table 1
Program Focus

	School-Based	Community-Based
Activities* **		
(Mentors who engage in "a lot" of...)		
Social activities	22.6%	59.3%
Academic activities	65.9%	39.9%
Job activities	7.7%	11.0%
Contact* **		
Mentors who talk to mentee's teacher "sometimes" or "pretty often"	67.8%	22.6%
Mentors who talk to mentee's parent "sometimes" or "pretty often"	22.3%	84.7%
Academic Effectiveness*		
(Mentors who feel they have had an impact on their mentee's...)		
Grades	74.5%	60.8%
Behavior/attitude toward school	85.0%	76.0%
School attendance	55.3%	44.6%
Social Effectiveness*		
(Mentors who feel they have had an impact on their mentee's...)		
Social skills	77.6%	87.4%
Feelings about themselves	87.3%	94.3%
Family relationships	45.4%	66.1%
Showing concern for others	73.3%	83.5%
Communication skills	79.0%	88.4%
Youth		
is having trouble in school***	57.4%	41.3%
is a juvenile offender*	5.9%	10.4%
has been held back†	23.7%	17.5%

*** Difference is significant at p≤.001.
* Difference is significant at p<.05.
† Difference is significant at p<.10.

Source: Mentor Survey

CB matches spend "some" or "a lot" of time talking about personal issues—not a statistically significant difference).

Also in line with a focus on school success, a strong relationship between the youth's teacher and the mentor is encouraged in SB programs. Teachers are often involved in SB programs, nominating youth for participation and sometimes providing supervision and support for mentors. As a result, SB programs are characterized by more contact between mentors and teachers, whereas CB mentors have more contact with the youth's parents.

Mentors in SB programs also feel more effective in influencing their mentee's school performance and behavior than do CB mentors. More SB than CB mentors feel they have improved their mentee's general school success, including grades, school attendance, and behavior in and attitude toward school. In contrast, mentors in CB programs feel more effective in influencing their mentee's social behavior than do SB mentors by, for example, improving social skills, self-esteem, relationships with family members and showing concern for others.

SB mentors' feelings of efficacy in school-related domains may result from their contact with youth's school and teachers, and from the fact that SB programs serve more academically troubled youth and marginally more youth who have been held back in school than do the CB programs in our sample. In contrast, CB programs serve more youth who have been in contact with the juvenile justice system. Youth from community-based and school-based programs were similar on all other demographic characteristics. Ratios of male and female youth are identical for CB and SB programs. And both program types serve proportionately more elementary than middle school students and more middle-school than high school students. A little more than one-third of youth in both SB and CB programs are living in poverty.

Table 2
Mentor Characteristics

	School-Based	Community-Based
Age* **		
21 or under	32.6%	11.8%
22 to 49	32.6%	69.4%
50 or older	34.8%	18.8%
Not Caucasian* **	28.4%	15.5%
Gender[n.s.]		
Male	33.0%	40.0%
Female	67.0%	60.0%

*** Difference is significant at p≤.001.
[n.s.] Difference is not significant.

Source: Mentor Survey

Table 3
Program Cost and Staffing

	School-Based	Community-Based
Cost per youth[1]		
Range	$19 - $2,875	$14 - $6,148
Median[2]	$568	$1,369
Average[2]	$566	$1,543
Total budget[1]		
Range	$400 - $660,000	$200 - $1,000,000
Median	$28,000 - $30,000	$115,000
Average	$13,204	$212,950
Number of full-time staff		
Range	0 - 16	0 - 23
Mode	1	1
Average	2.96	3.52
Percent of programs with on-site coordinators* **	67.9%	33.3%

[1] Based on 16 SB programs and 17 CB programs. Three SB budgets include stipends for mentors.
[2] See text for an explanation of how median and average were calculated.
*** Difference is significant at p≤.001.

Source: Program Survey

Mentor Characteristics

SB mentoring programs appear to target and attract types of mentors different from those who typically volunteer for community-based mentoring programs. Mentors in SB programs are equally divided among three age groups—21 or under, 22 to 49, and older adults—whereas mentors in CB programs are overwhelmingly aged 22 to 49. SB programs are also better at attracting (or targeting) minority mentors than are CB programs, although mentors in both types of programs are most commonly Caucasian. The gender distribution of mentors is not different across program types.

Program Cost and Staffing

A rough analysis of program cost reveals that SB programs cost less per youth than do CB programs. Using an overall budget figure divided by the estimated number of youth served over the course of the year,[1] we found the average annual cost per youth in SB programs was $567 versus $1,369 in CB programs. Although preliminary, these numbers reveal what program operators have long thought—SB programs are significantly less expensive to run per youth than are CB programs.

The actual cost per youth for SB programs, however, is likely greater than the budgeted amount, due to their tendency to rely on in-kind donations. SB programs probably receive more in-kind contributions of school staff, office space and telephones than do CB programs. Attempting to estimate the cost of these in-kind contributions is difficult. Yet, even if we assign a generous dollar cost to SB donations, such as $259 per youth per year for donated staff time[2] and $250 per youth per year for other in-kind operating expenses, the SB programs in our sample would still be significantly less expensive to run than the CB programs.

Although SB programs are less expensive to implement than are CB programs, it is important to consider that SB programs provide fewer contact hours per youth. In other words, while $567 per year may provide a mentor for a youth in a SB program, it only buys, on average, six hours per month of meeting time. On the other hand, CB programs buy a much higher "dosage" of mentoring for the cost—$1,369 per youth buys an average of 12 hours per month.

SB programs also have fewer full-time staff per program than do CB programs. SB programs often have on-site coordinators responsible for running the program and supervising the matches. On-site coordinators are usually teachers, principals, counselors or program staff. They may be dedicated to the program or split their time among many responsibilities in the school. The on-site coordinators have the benefit of having more interaction with youth in the program than do CB program case managers. Because they have a vested interest in giving their students remedial academic help, some schools contribute to the salaries of on-site coordinators, thus reducing the cost to SB programs.

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Program and Youth Perspectives: Benefits of Youth and Senior Mentors

The fact that school-based programs attract and recruit youth and senior mentors is significant, suggesting that these programs are targeting previously underutilized segments of the population. This is a powerful way to serve more youth. There are also other reasons, gleaned from our interviews with youth, agency and school staff, why working with these volunteers may be beneficial.

Benefits of working with youth mentors:

- Youth mentors engage in activities of interest to their young mentees;
- Youth mentors have a lot of enthusiasm;
- Youth feel special when older peers are interested in them;
- High school and college-age youth are easy to recruit because they are located in subscribed areas;
- Young mentors can learn, early on, the importance of volunteering and the significance of their efforts; and
- Youth can be given incentives to volunteer (e.g., getting course credit, fulfilling a community service requirement).

Benefits of working with senior mentors:

- Youth enjoy spending time with senior mentors for the same reasons they enjoy other mentors—because they are "fun," "nice," "funny" and "helpful." One director mentioned:

  If the youth knows that the senior is sincere, devoted, committed and confidential, there's success.

- Youth appreciate the experience of older mentors, as seen in the comments of one youth:

  He's helped me complete my work. If I have a problem and my mom can't help, my dad's at work and my brother's busy, I can call him—he has more experience and might be able to help me.

- Working with seniors helps sensitize youth to older individuals.
- Parents in community-based programs may not be as threatened by seniors.
- Seniors bring with them a unique perspective, as seen in the comments of one staff member:

  They've experienced a lot. They also have more time. Some of life's pressures are off of them. It's also a life perspective thing. They have a real appreciation for life. They are glad to be contributing and to find places that appreciate them.

- Senior mentors get significant benefits from volunteering (e.g., health benefits, feeling more useful and appreciated).

Operational Differences Between Community- and School-Based Models

With the exception of screening, program infrastructure is similar in CB and SB programs; mentors in SB and CB programs get the same amount of prematch training and postmatch training and support. However, in order to meet their goals—increasing school success, recruiting different mentors, reducing program costs (and expanding mentoring)—the SB mentoring model has made other significant operational changes from traditional CB programming. Figure 2 highlights the main operational differences between CB and SB mentoring programs.

Location and Supervision

School-based programs typically permit their mentees and mentors to meet only on school grounds under the supervision of program or school staff. Many SB programs do sponsor occasional "community" trips to sporting events, concerts, museums, etc. These trips, however, are almost always supervised and are not the primary meeting opportunity in any of the school-based programs in our sample. A few SB programs in our sample do allow mentors and mentees to meet one-on-one outside of school; however, their *main* meeting place is at the school.

Limiting meetings to the school may be one of the reasons why social activities are less common in SB than in CB matches. Mentors in SB programs have limited options—painting in the art room, basketball in the school gym, playing on the playground or just doing homework—for how to spend their time together. In contrast, CB mentors are free to take their mentees to a variety of locations and thus have a greater variety of activities from which to choose. In addition, interactions and meetings between school-based mentors and youth are nearly always supervised by program or school staff. Supervised interactions may not permit as much spontaneity or variety as do community-based meetings. Through its

Table 4
Infrastructure

	School-Based	Community-Based
Prematch training[n.s.]		
None	19.3%	22.7%
Less than 2 hours	38.0%	32.9%
2 to 6 hours	35.2%	35.2%
More than 6 hours	7.5%	9.3%
Postmatch training and support[n.s.]		
Low	32.4%	30.7%
Medium	43.9%	48.7%
High	23.7%	20.6%
How often mentors talk to program staff for support[n.s.]		
Never	11.2%	7.2%
Almost never	20.3%	19.9%
Every other month	17.1%	22.8%
At least once/month	35.2%	40.8%
At least once/week	16.2%	9.3%

[n.s.] Difference is not significant.

Source: Mentor Survey

Table 5
Meeting Location

	School-Based	Community-Based
Meet at a regular place* **	89.2%	33.9%
Meet regularly at school* **	80.8%	9.6%

*** Difference is significant at p≤.001.

Source: Mentor Survey

Figure 2
Overview of Operational Differences Between School-Based and Community-Based Mentoring Programs

School-Based	Community-Based
• Meet at school in a supervised setting	• Meet wherever youth or mentor chooses
• Reduced mentor screening	• High mentor screening
• Regularly scheduled meeting time	• Meeting time is variable
• Shorter-term commitment	• Longer commitment
• Matching is less stringent	• Matching is more stringent
• Matches spend less time together	• Matches spend more time together
• More likely that program dictates activities	• More likely that youth and mentor choose activities together

intensive supervision of matches and its meeting location, the SB model may provide less flexibility for the mentor than does a CB program.

Although lack of flexibility presents a limitation of the SB model, meeting with youth in a school setting also has numerous advantages. Many school-based staff believe that being place-based may benefit SB programs by attracting mentors who would not typically mentor. Reducing out-of-pocket costs to mentors and minimizing the effort that is required from mentors to devise meeting activities may help explain why SB programs are able to attract more young and older adult mentors than are CB programs. Older adults relying on public transportation may also be attracted to a program that does not necessitate community outings. Other potential mentors who question the safety of the community in which the mentee lives may be more likely to mentor in a safe location such as a school.

The supervision of matches in SB programs allows them to utilize more high school students as mentors. CB programs often have age restrictions for mentors because of supervision and transportation considerations. Careful supervision of matches also benefits the program by allowing school or program staff to carefully track youth's progress and the development of the relationship. Because a program or school staff person is always available, s/he can identify problems and work with the mentor or student to resolve them. Staff in CB programs must make an additional effort to find out how matches are progressing. Typically, this is accomplished by regular phone calls to the mentor to see how often s/he is meeting with the youth, what they have been doing, and what, if any, problems have been encountered. In CB programs, establishing regular program contact with youth is difficult; therefore, CB program staff typically rely on mentors' reports of problems and successes. In SB programs, school or program staff can learn about the relationship through observation and contact with other school personnel. Although there are no differences in the amount of postmatch support that CB and SB mentors receive, program staff believe that having an agency or school staff person available during meetings may make mentors feel more confident.

Finally, being based at a school might help reduce program costs. Frequently, SB mentoring programs rely on the assistance of teachers and administrators as well as the school facilities. CB programs must maintain separate offices and, as such, have increased operating expenses. CB programs also cannot rely on school staff time to bolster staff power. These in-kind contributions from school partners may help explain the reduced cost of school-based versus community-based programs.

Screening

Screening is a critical component of all mentoring programs. Programs must be confident that volunteers who might cause harm to youth are deterred from mentoring. Screening may also help "weed out" adults who would not make good mentors—those who would not follow through with their commitment to the youth or who do not have the skills to work with them. Most SB programs have less stringent screening requirements than do CB programs. Time-consuming screening processes, such as those used in BBBS, have been demonstrated to result in a

Table 6
Screening

	School-Based	Community-Based
Percent of programs that screen mentors using a...		
Written application***	60.7%	96.3%
Personal interview*	71.4%	96.3%
Reference check***	50.0%	92.6%
Criminal record check***	46.4%	88.9%
Percent of programs utilizing...* **		
More than 4 of the above screening procedures	42.1%	92.2%
3 or 4	16.1%	4.05%
Fewer than 3	41.8%	3.8%

*** Difference is significant at p≤.001.
* Difference is significant at p<.05.

Source: Program Survey

low inquiries-to-match ratio. In fact, a recent study estimated a national yield rate of 27 percent from inquiry to acceptance in BBBS CB programs. The rate was much higher (48%) for the five SB BBBS programs in the study (Curtis and Hansen-Schwoebel, forthcoming). Because many mentors who are willing to volunteer their time are "lost" during a long and intrusive screening process (Roaf et al., 1994), the reduced screening techniques employed by SB programs may keep potential volunteers from dropping out of a typically lengthy process. Although they are not cutting back on the amount of screening, many CB programs are beginning to use streamlined screening procedures in order to increase their yield (Branch and Arbreton, forthcoming).

Less screening may also have implications for program cost. Criminal background checks are costly and reference checks can consume a lot of staff time, explaining part of the cost differential between the two types of mentoring programs.

Meeting Time, Commitment and Decision-Making

Similar to screening, SB programs require a shorter and less intensive mentor commitment. Not surprisingly, mentors and youth in SB programs also spend less time together than do their community-based counterparts. Fewer meeting hours may be attractive to some adults. Many adults are busy and do not feel that they can spend the amount of time with a youth that some mentoring programs require, often 15 to 20 hours a month. Because SB programs require shorter meetings, typically one hour a week, and a shorter commitment (often one school year, or nine months, in contrast to CB programs that often ask for a year commitment), more adults may volunteer their time for a SB mentoring program. This, in turn, may result in providing more mentors to more youth.

The two types of programs also differ in how decisions are made about activities. School-based mentors and their mentees have less voice than community-based matches in choosing activities. It is common that mentors and youth in CB programs make joint decisions about their activities. The fact that SB programs specify more match activities may be a drawback because matches may spend less time engaging in social activities (which the next chapter reports is key to the development of successful mentoring relationships). However, it may help SB programs achieve their more specific goals of improving youth's school success. Another potential benefit of programmatic decision-making is attracting mentors to the program. This feature of SB programs may be attractive to adults who would prefer mentoring in a more structured environment.

Table 7
Meeting Time, Commitment and Decision-Making

	School-Based	Community-Based
Average hours of meeting per month* **	6.25	11.81
Meeting commitment * **		
Low	18.5	11.1
Medium	63.0	3.7
High	18.5	85.2
Who decides how the match spends its time* **		
Youth	4.0	1.5
Mentor and youth together	62.5	87.0
Mentor	7.1	6.4
Program	26.3	5.2

***Difference is significant at at p≤.001.

Source: Mentor Survey

Matching

Criteria used to match youth and mentors in SB programs differ from criteria traditionally used in CB programs. Similarity between mentors and mentees is one of the most prominent ways that CB programs match adults with youth. Program operators generally feel that greater similarity between mentor and mentee creates a solid foundation on which to build a relationship. At a minimum, CB programs usually require that mentors and mentees be of the same gender. But many CB programs also create matches based on shared interests, hoping that mentors and youth who like to do the same things will enjoy spending time together. Similarity in race/ethnicity has also been argued as an important factor in constructing successful mentoring matches, and many CB programs prefer to match by race/ethnicity.

Although both SB and CB programs tend to create matches based on shared race, gender and interests, these practices appear to be less common in SB programs. Fewer mentors from SB programs share gender and race/ethnicity with their mentee than do mentors from CB programs. Mentors from SB programs are also less likely to share interests with their mentees. These distinctions in match characteristics suggest differences in matching practices.

SB programs may create fewer matches based on similarities because the selection of youth with whom a mentor could be matched is more limited than in CB programs. SB programs have relatively short waiting lists (in our sample, 49 youth on average). This number is even smaller when considering single schools within these programs. Typically, mentors in SB programs identify a school in which they wish to work. Because the number of youth on a wait list at any given time in a particular school is often small, there may not be a youth available that matches the mentor's gender, race and interests. CB programs, on the other hand, typically have large waiting lists (in our sample, 137 youth on average) and, therefore, can identify a youth who matches the mentor more closely.

Another possible explanation for SB matching less on similarities may simply be that increased program structure and supervision make it unnecessary or that it is not important to the goals of SB programs. School-based programs may be more likely to consider a youth's specific school-related needs and the ability of a mentor to address them when determining appropriate matches, rather than whether they have interests and other characteristics in common.

Enrollment processes may also affect matching practices. Community-based programs typically have continual enrollment; processing a youth's application and locating an appropriate mentor can take several months. School-based programs, in contrast, are more likely to conduct the majority of their intake near the beginning of a school year. Because mentors are required to commit to the program for the duration of only one school year, matches must be made quickly for a pair to have sufficient time to develop a relationship before the school year

Table 8
Matching

	School-Based	Community-Based
Percent of same-gender matches***	76.9%	88.4%
Percent of same-race matches*	66.0%	74.1%
Percent of matches with shared interests***	66.5%	85.5%

*** Difference is significant at p≤.001.
* Difference is significant at p<.05.

Source: Mentor Survey

ends. Thus, program staff are required to look at the group of youth referred to the program and the pool of volunteers who are readily available for that year and pair them up the best they can. This may, in some cases, preclude attempts to determine interests and match mentors and youth on that basis.

There are some advantages to less rigorous matching procedures. One of the most common problems in CB programs is a shortage of male mentors for male youth. CB programs, given the lack of on-site match supervision, rarely make cross-gender matches. Given their structure, SB programs can more easily create cross-gender matches and thus can potentially match more boys with mentors. Similarly, because there is a shortage of minority mentors, allowing more cross-race matches could provide more minority youth with mentors. On the other hand, programs that focus on providing youth with an adult role model may feel that matching on race and gender is critical.

Relationship Quality

Finally, we examined differences in the quality of relationships that develop in SB and CB programs. Given the programmatic differences between CB and SB mentoring models, we anticipated that mentors might report some differences in the quality of their relationships with their mentees. However, despite differences in programming and operations, the two models are quite similar in terms of relationship quality. Relationships in these two program types look the same with regard to the amount of emotional support and instrumental help mentors provide to youth: over 90 percent of mentors agree that they provide emotional and instrumental support to their mentees (with about 31% strongly agreeing they provide emotional support and 9% strongly agreeing that they provide instrumental help). On our third measure of relationship quality, however, there is a difference between reports from CB and SB mentors. Although more than 90 percent of mentors in both types of programs reported feeling at least "somewhat" close to their mentees, significantly more mentors in CB programs (45% versus 32%) reported feeling "very" close to their mentees.

These findings have two important implications. First, we know from previous research on CB programs (Grossman and Johnson, 1999) that stronger relationships result in better impacts for youth participating in those programs. What we cannot tell from previous research, however, is what the critical levels of relationship quality should be to achieve these impacts, and whether these critical levels differ in SB and CB programs. Perhaps "somewhat or very" close relationships in the SB setting are sufficient to foster positive outcomes; or it may be that relationships must be "very" close in order for youth to benefit. Our assessment, however, is that there is enough evidence across all three measures of relationship quality, combined with strong infrastructure in SB programs, to suggest that SB programs are worthy of further study to test impacts.

Despite differences in programming and operations, the two models are quite similar in terms of relationship quality.

Second, our findings on these relationship quality measures indicate that there is room for improvement in both CB and SB programs. The next chapter will examine the factors that were present in fostering the strongest relationships and whether those factors differ for SB and CB programs.

Summary

There are several important ways that SB programs differ from CB programs: their focus on school success in a school setting, the mentors they target and attract, and their lower cost. There are also some differences in the quality of relationships that develop within these two program types. Both types of programs appear to be effective vehicles for providing youth with emotional support and instrumental help, but mentors in CB programs report having closer relationships with youth. Further research on youth outcomes is warranted based on the levels of relationship quality that we observed.

Table 9
Relationship Quality

	School-Based	Community-Based
Closeness* **		
Percent of mentors who feel "somewhat" or "very" close to their mentee	91.3	94.2
Percent of mentors who feel "very close" to their mentee	32.3	44.9
Support[n.s.]		
Percent of mentors who agree or strongly agree that they provide emotional support	96.5	98.0
Percent of mentors who strongly agree that they provide emotional support	31.6	31.2
Instrumental Help[n.s.]		
Percent of mentors who agree or strongly agree that they provide instrumental help	90.0	92.8
Percent of mentors who strongly agree that they provide instrumental help	9.4	9.2

*** Difference is significant at p≤.001.
n.s. No significant differences.

Source: Mentor Survey

Making Mentoring Relationships Better: Program, Matching and Activity Factors that Contribute to Mentors' Positive Relationships with Youth

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In the previous chapter, we saw that mentors involved in school-based and community-based programs are similar in terms of emotional and instrumental supportiveness but different in the extent to which they feel "close" to their mentees. We also saw that, in both program types, there is room for improvement on these three dimensions of relationship quality. For example, although the vast majority of mentors in both CB and SB programs agree they provide emotional support to their mentees, only about one-third strongly agree they provide this kind of support.

These findings lead to three important questions: What factors contribute to the development of close, supportive relationships in CB and SB programs? What programmatic benchmarks can programs use to optimally ensure that relationships will develop positively? And, given operational differences between CB and SB programs, do these benchmarks differ for the two program models? The purpose of this chapter is to address these questions. We identify the factors, and critical levels of these factors, that contribute to the development of the strongest mentor-youth relationships. We also examine whether the factors and critical levels differ for SB and CB programs.[3]

What Program Characteristics and Practices Matter, and How Much Is Enough?

First, we tested the importance of several factors in determining relationship quality in CB and SB programs. Despite their operational and programmatic differences, eight of the nine factors that we identified as important, were important for *both* CB and SB programs.

The *eight factors* that were consistently related to mentors' reports of relationship quality, in *both* CB and SB programs are:[4]

- Mentor and youth engagement in social activities,
- Mentor and youth engagement in academic activities,
- Hours per month youth and mentor spend together,
- How decisions are made about how mentors and youth spend their time,
- Mentor-youth similarity of interests,
- Prematch orientation and training,
- Postmatch training and support from program staff, and
- Age of the mentee.

In CB programs only, one additional factor—screening prior to the match—was consistently associated with mentors' relationship development with youth. In SB programs, the level of volunteer screening was *not* associated with relationship development. Relationship outcomes did not systematically vary for CB or SB programs by any other factors examined in our analyses, including mentor socioeconomic status (SES), mentor age and youth risk characteristics.

Once these factors were identified, our next step was to delineate benchmarks for each factor, indicating "how much is enough" to achieve the strongest relationships. In this chapter, we describe each factor in turn and present a summary—in Table 10—of the critical levels associated with the closest, most supportive relationships, and those with the least strong relationships.

Our final goal was to determine whether these critical levels are the same for CB and SB programs. We found that critical levels are identical for six of the eight key factors on all three relationship measures, with two minor exceptions. For social activities and postmatch training and support, the critical level varies slightly for SB and CB programs on one of the three measures of relationship development. We incorporate these findings and their implications into their respective sections.[5]

Table 10
Benchmarks for Developing Strong Relationships

	*Mentors in the **most** close and supportive relationships:*	*Mentors in the **least** close and supportive relationships:*
Mentor and Youth Interactions		
Engage in social activities	"Some" or "A lot"	"None at all"
Engage in academic activities	"A little," "Some" or "A lot"	"None at all"
Extent of contact	Greater than 10 hours per month	Fewer than 3 hours per month
Choosing activities	Getting ideas from youth and then deciding together	Mentor decides or program prescribes
Program Practices		
Matching	Mentor and mentee share similar interests	Mentor and mentee do not share similar interests
Prematch orientation/ training	More than six hours	Fewer than two hours
Postmatch training and support from program staff	At least two hours of postmatch training or a minimum of monthly contact with program staff	No training after the match and less than monthly contact between staff and mentor
Screening (CB only)	The four standard screening procedures plus additional screening	Fewer than three of the four standard screening procedures
Youth Characteristics		
Mentee age	Elementary school age	High school age

What Mentors and Youth Do Together

Engaging in social activities. At the crux of the mentoring relationship is the bond that forms between the youth and mentor. If a bond does not form, then youth and mentors may disengage from the match before the mentoring relationship lasts long enough to have a positive impact on youth. In P/PV's research on BBBS matches, engaging in friendship-based activities was a key component of relationships that endured. McClanahan (1998) reported similar findings in a study on the Hospital Youth Mentoring Program (HYMP), a site-based career mentoring program. Youth in mentoring pairs that engaged in social activities reported more positive perceptions of their relationships than did youth who did not engage in social activities with their mentors. In addition, mentoring pairs that engaged in social activities reported gains in career-related information and knowledge similar to those reported by pairs whose relationships focused primarily on imparting career-based information. In other words, social activities did not detract from the instructional knowledge youth felt they had gained from the mentoring experience.

In light of these previous findings, therefore, it is not surprising that engaging in social activities (such as hanging out, going to events together, and doing other things like having lunch) emerged as critical to the development of positive relationships in both CB and SB programs. Indeed, relative to all the other variables we examined, the extent to which youth and mentors engage in social activities is the strongest factor associated with positive relationship development for both SB and CB programs. Engaging in social activities "some" or "a lot" is associated with the highest levels of closeness, and emotional and instrumental supportiveness. In contrast, mentors who do not engage in any social activities score the lowest on these relationship measures. Mentors who engage in social activities "a little" fall in between these two groups.

The effect of not engaging in social activities on mentor reports of closeness is slightly different for mentors in CB compared to SB programs. Although all relationships are the least positive when mentors do not engage in social activities with their mentee, the contrast is greater for mentors in CB programs than for those in SB programs. This finding might be explained by the differential association between engaging in social and academic activities across these two program types. In SB programs, social activities and academic activities are negatively correlated; that is, mentors who engage in fewer social activities engage in more academic activities. In CB programs, however, social and academic activities are not correlated. As discussed below, engaging in academic activities also positively affects relationship quality. Thus, in SB programs the negative effect of engaging in fewer social activities may be partially compensated for by engaging in more academic activities. Nevertheless, SB mentors who do not engage in social activities have the least supportive relationships because engaging in academic activities does not produce the same level of closeness and supportiveness as would engaging in social activities.

Engaging in academic activities. Increased support for mentoring programs has been garnered by research showing that mentoring can have a positive effect on youth's school success. Given the positive potential of mentoring, educators are seeking the best way to integrate mentoring into the schools. Many SB programs have increased the level of academic activity in their matches over what has been typical of CB programs, in the hope of having a bigger effect on youth's school success. Although our work cannot address its effect on grades, our findings provide some support for the relationship benefits of engaging in academic activities. Whether or not mentors engage in social activities, those mentors who engage in academic activities reported slightly higher levels of closeness and instrumental supportiveness than do those who do not. Engaging in academic activities, however, was not related to emotional supportiveness.

Program and Youth Perspectives: The Value of Social Activities in Relationship Formation

Youth and staff in the programs we visited agreed that engaging in social activities is a central part of successful mentoring. Social activities may help develop close, supportive relationships for a number of reasons:

- **Youth enjoy social activities.**
  When asked about their favorite activity, most youth in community-based programs mentioned social activities like sports, conversation and visiting their mentor at home. Close to half of the respondents from school-based programs also listed social activities among their favorites.

- **Social activities allow youth to have fun.**
  Youth in our focus groups mentioned the importance of having fun, visiting new places, and doing things they may not otherwise have the opportunity to do.

- **Conversations help relationships to develop.**
  - Talking helps youth and mentors find common interests.
  - Talking helps the mentor understand more about the child's needs and strengths.
  - Talking allows youth to learn more about their mentors. Several youth mentioned wanting to know more about their mentor, or proudly told us they knew something personal about their mentor.
  - Talking gives youth a context for confiding in their mentors. Youth discussed the importance of being able to confide in their mentor:

Your mentor should be...someone you can share secrets with.

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Program and Youth Perspectives: The Value of Academic Activities in Relationship Formation

Mentoring programs, especially school-based programs with an academic focus, encourage academic activities, yet also stress the primacy of relationship development. How can relationships develop around academic activities? And how do academic activities differ from tutoring?

- **Youth appreciate academic help.**
  Youth described mentors as helping them in a number of academic areas and valued this help. Some youth also mentioned valuing specific skills that made their mentors particularly helpful.

- **Academic activities can be fun.**
  Successful mentors find ways to make learning fun (e.g., buying books at a bookstore, playing computer games, playing cards to help youth learn about counting, writing stories with youth about topics that interest them).

- **Academic activities can help "break the ice."**
  In school-based programs, academic activities can be used as a familiar, nonthreatening way to start a relationship.

- **Working on academics may make youth more receptive to academic help from their mentor.**
  Youth who work more frequently on academic activities with their mentor may talk more about problems at school and may be more receptive to help in the school context. Although over 30 percent of youth respondents from community-based programs included "school" when listing topics discussed with their mentor, five of 13 youth (38%) mentioned not wanting to talk with their mentor about negative incidents at school; none of the youth from school-based programs mentioned not wanting to discuss school-related issues with their mentor. One youth in a community-based program offered the following reason:

  I won't tell her how I do in school...If I get a bad grade, she won't pick me up.

  Another, similarly explained:

  [I wouldn't talk about] bad days in school. He gets disappointed and I don't like it.

- **A balance of academic and social activities is most productive.**
  Youth appreciated mentors who could find a good balance between social and academic activities. This balance should, in part, be determined by youth's needs and their preferences. Without this balance, youth can be left frustrated:

  I'd be like 'What do you do for a living?' and she'd be like, 'Do your homework.' It was boring.

  A perfect mentor is someone who...knows when it's time to play and when it's time to do work.

- **Mentors can help youth understand that they are friends, not tutors.**
  In one school-based program with an academic focus, youth understood that their mentors were not only there to teach, as seen in the comments of one youth:

  I have had other tutors and stuff working with me, but not another mentor.

Hours spent meeting was not as strong a predictor of relationship development as were the types of activities youth and mentors engage in together.

Nevertheless, engaging in social activities emerged as a much stronger predictor of close and supportive relationships than did engaging in academic activities. This finding stresses the importance of social activities, even in the SB setting, and supports recent findings linking social activities to perceived impacts on youth (DuBois and Neville, 1997).

Number of hours per month youth and mentors meet. Not surprisingly, similar to findings by Dubois and Neville (1997), mentors who spend more time with youth feel more close and supportive in their relationships. However, it is important to note that hours spent meeting, when examined in conjunction with other measures, was not as strong a predictor of relationship development as were the *types of activities* youth and mentors engage in together (in particular, engagement in "social" activities) when they meet.

Who decides how they spend their time. Although most volunteers come to a mentoring program because they want to help youth, how they offer that help can affect the developing bond between youth and mentor. Earlier work on relationship development within BBBS programs suggests that mentors who use a developmental approach with their mentee (e.g., center their expectations on developing a reliable, trusting relationship with youth in part by incorporating the youth into the decision-making process) are more likely to develop lasting relationships with youth than are those mentors who use a prescriptive approach (e.g., view as primary their goals for the match and therefore set the goals, the pace and/or the ground rules for the relationship) (Sipe, 1996; Morrow and Styles, 1995). Key to the developmental relationship is the way in which mentors and youth make decisions. Mentors in developmental relationships give youth more "voice and choice." In contrast, in prescriptive relationships, mentors have an agenda and tend to steer the meetings in the direction they prefer. The BBBS relationship-formation study was conducted through analysis of intensive interviews with mentors and mentees about their relationships. For the current study, we did not conduct extensive open-ended interviews, but we did ask mentors how decisions about activities were made. Category options were: youth decides; mentor gets ideas from youth and then they decide together; mentor decides; or the program sets how they will spend time together. Reflecting findings from the earlier BBBS relationship development study, we found that mentors reported closer relationships and more supportive relationships both emotionally and instrumentally when decisions were made together. The least positive relationships resulted when decisions about activities were made primarily by the mentor or established in advance by the program.

Program Practices

Prematch orientation and training. Research and practice point to the importance of training for helping relationships develop in programmatic settings. Orientation and training that occur prior to the match set the stage for the mentoring relationship. In keeping with earlier work, we found that prematch training is associated with closer and more supportive relationships in both SB and CB programs: those mentors who attended fewer than two hours of prematch orientation or training reported the lowest levels of closeness and supportiveness; mentors with the strongest relationships had attended six or more hours of orientation prior to the match.

Further analyses show that prematch training is "indirectly" related to closeness and supportiveness. Those mentors who receive prematch training also tend to spend more hours with their mentee and are more likely to engage in social activities with them; these measures, in turn, are related to the development of close and supportive relationships. Perhaps the prematch training establishes the importance of spending time with the mentee and gives mentors insights into the value of building a relationship via the activities they engage in.

Postmatch training and support from program staff. Over and above the effects of prematch training on the developing relationship are the additional

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benefits of ongoing training and contact with program staff. Even for those who attend prematch training, mentor-youth relationships are bolstered by higher levels of postmatch training and staff support. The critical level of support appeared to be approximately monthly contact with program staff. Slightly less support was adequate in situations where more than two hours of training occurs after the match is made.

Similar to what we found for prematch training, and concurring with findings in other reports (Furano et al., 1993; Tierney and Branch, 1992), mentors who receive more postmatch training and support from program staff also tend to spend more hours per month with their mentees. In turn, spending more hours with a mentee is related to stronger relationship development. Ongoing training and program support of mentors is particularly valuable for the development of emotionally supportive relationships in SB programs. Equal proportions of SB and CB mentors receive low levels of ongoing training and support (about one-third) and therefore, feel less "there for youth" than those who receive more postmatch support; however, the SB mentors who receive this low level described themselves as even less "there for youth" compared to their CB counterparts who receive similarly low levels of postmatch support.

The screening process. As we emphasized in the second chapter, screening is a critical component of all mentoring programs. Program staff, school personnel, youth and parents need to feel confident about the volunteer who is spending time one-on-one with his or her mentee.

That said, we found mixed support for the importance of screening as a contributor to positive mentoring relationships. In SB programs, the extent of screening is not associated with the strength of the relationship that develops between the youth and mentor. This is an important finding, given that 42 percent of the SB programs in our sample used the least stringent screening practices.

In contrast, screening *is* associated with relationship development in CB programs. Mentors in CB programs with low-level screening reported significantly lower ratings of closeness, and emotional and instrumental supportiveness than did mentors in CB programs that used more stringent screening practices.

Although screening in and of itself is not associated with relationship development in SB programs, we noted earlier that ongoing training and support emerges in SB programs as particularly important, perhaps because screening is less intensive. As long as SB programs continue to provide adequate postmatch training and support, their less stringent screening practices may be acceptable for assisting positive relationship development. However, again, it is important to note that, regardless of its association with relationship development, screening is a critical component for all mentoring programs.

Similarity of interests. In general, reviews of program practices have determined that program matching practices are not as critical as screening, orientation and training, and supervision (Sipe, 1996). Ultimately, that remains true because infrastructure lays the groundwork for creating and supporting the matches that are made. Nevertheless, we examined associations between mentor-youth similarity and mentoring relationship quality because it is consistently of concern to program operators. In this study, we examined several aspects of similarity: gender, ethnicity and interests.

Programs often spend considerable time and expense matching youth with mentors based on gender and ethnicity. There are many times when parents state a preference. Also, programs concerned with liability issues may only make same-gender matches. And program philosophy may be to make matches based on gender and ethnicity. These are good reasons to continue matching on these basic characteristics. However, this and prior research point to the difficulty

Program and Youth Perspectives: Matching on Similar Interests and Compatibility

All the programs we visited made some effort to match youth with mentors based on shared interests or compatibility. This practice may ultimately make matches more effective, as case workers across a number of programs mentioned when describing what makes a match successful:

> *Two people who can find some kind of commonality...They need to be engaged by each other—to find something that they have in common and identify the differences and be interested in those differences.*

Programs mentioned several techniques that help make compatible matches with shared interests:

- Ask youth and/or volunteers to complete personality inventories or more simplified interest surveys.
- Provide mentors with interest surveys to complete with youth.
- Allow groups of mentors and youth to meet, then give them the opportunity to note first, second and third choices for a match.
- In school-based programs, take advantage of school staff who know the child well to learn more about the child's needs and interests.

programs have attracting male and minority mentors, leaving many boys and minority youth on lengthy wait lists. Earlier research that examined the effect of cross-ethnic matches on youth outcomes did not provide an empirical basis for refusing this type of match (see Sipe, 1996; Morrow and Styles, 1995; Furano et al., 1993). The findings from this study concur. From the mentors' perspective, cross-ethnic matches were as close and supportive as same-ethnic matches. In addition, same-gender matches did not differ from cross-gender matches in closeness and supportiveness.[6]

However, sharing interests is important in relationship development. Mentors who share similar interests with their mentee feel closer and more emotionally and instrumentally supportive of their mentee compared to mentors who do not share similar interests with their mentee. In fact, after social activities, sharing similar interests is the second most important contributing factor to the development of close, supportive mentoring relationships.

Programs can address this issue by polling youth and mentors for interests and matching them based on their findings. However, there are situations where a program's interest in making a match quickly or one based on geographical considerations may supercede other considerations. Therefore, other ways programs can address this issue of "matching interests" is to include in their training ideas to help mentors identify and draw out interests shared by mentors and youth.

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Mentee Characteristics

Age of the mentee. As youth approach middle school and high school years, they engage in fewer after-school activities (Sipe and Ma, 1997). After-school programs find it difficult to attract and retain teens. In this study, we found that mentors whose mentees are in middle or high school experience their relationships with their mentees as less close and less supportive than do mentors of youth in elementary school.

Clearly, these findings do not mean that programs should not serve older youth or that positive relationships do not develop between mentors and older youth. Instead, they suggest that mentors may feel less competent in their relationship or less confident about their ability to provide for older youth. These findings may, in part, be explained by our finding that older youth are less likely to share similar interests with their mentor, which, as we saw earlier, is associated with positive relationships. Also, programs serving older youth do not provide any more training than those serving younger youth, even though working with older youth may present more challenges to mentors.

That mentors see themselves as more instrumentally supportive of younger youth is a function of the fact that mentors of elementary school youth typically engage in more academic activities with these youth than do mentors of middle and high school youth. And, as we noted, engaging in academic activities is related to instrumental supportiveness.

Summary

These findings provide new empirical evidence supporting previously established program standards for program infrastructure. We found empirical support for the importance of prematch training and orientation along with ongoing training and support from program staff.

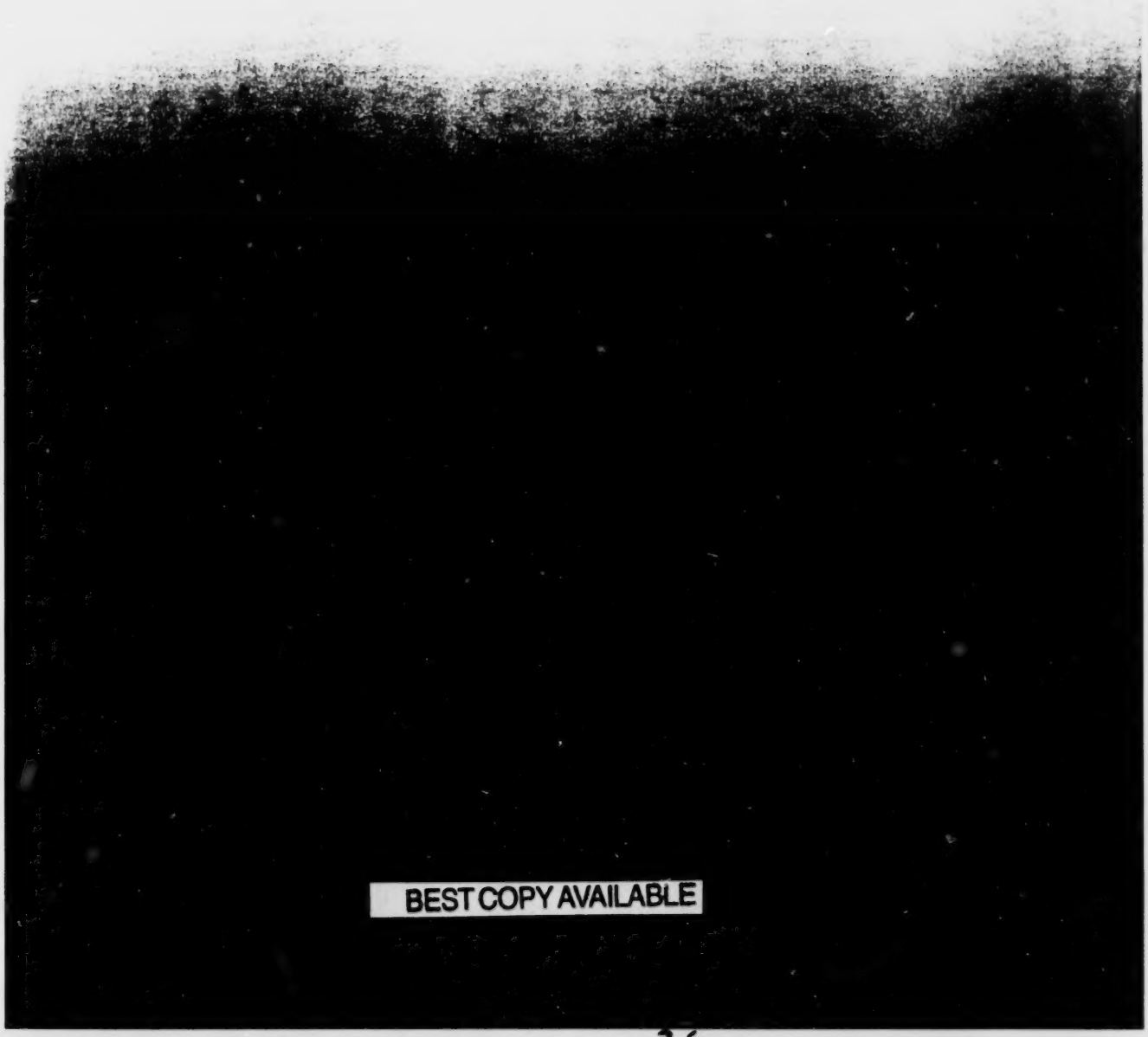
We found that although spending more time with mentees is better than less time, even more important is what youth and mentors do together during that time. In particular, engaging in social activities is key to developing close and supportive relationships.

Matching on gender and ethnicity is generally not linked to mentors' feelings of closeness and supportiveness, but programs may choose to match based on these characteristics because of their program philosophies or the desires of parents and youth. What is critical, however, is that mentors and youth find shared interests.

The message is clear: appropriate infrastructure and attention to interactions between youth and mentors are important indicators of the potential for success whether a program follows a community-based or a school-based model.

Appropriate infrastructure and attention to interactions between youth and mentors are important indicators of the potential for success whether a program follows a community-based or a school-based model.

Conclusions and Implications



The Mentoring School-Age Children study undertaken by P/PV in 1996 sought to increase our understanding of the range of programs that fall under the designation "mentoring" and the nature of relationships that develop within the context of different mentoring models. Through a survey of over 700 programs, we uncovered a wide range of mentoring models that includes traditional one-on-one community-based programs; more focused one-on-one models located in schools, youth organizations and businesses; and various types of group mentoring programs. Previous research has examined community-based mentoring fairly extensively, but we know very little about other types of mentoring programs. In this report, we focused on one-on-one mentoring in community-based programs and, in one of the fastest growing segments of the mentoring field, school-based mentoring. Drawing upon our knowledge of community-based mentoring, we collected data that allowed us to compare these two models along a number of dimensions.

Our findings have implications for both practitioners and funders as they make decisions about how best to increase the number of youth served in mentoring programs. And our research raises additional questions that need to be addressed in future research.

School-Based Mentoring Is Promising

Our findings suggest that a school-based approach to providing disadvantaged youth with volunteer mentors provides a promising complement to the traditional community-based model. Among the school-based programs in our sample, mentors reported relationships with youth that are similar in quality to those observed among mentors in community-based programs. However, the study focused only on relationship quality from the mentor's perspective. Research that examines relationship development from both the mentor's and the youth's perspective may provide additional insight into these relationships and the practices that strengthen them and will be an important next step for future research.

We also do not yet have data on how youth's lives are changed by their participation in school-based programs. However, we did find evidence for positive relationships in both school-based and community-based programs; and positive relationship development is the first step toward achieving impacts. Based on what we know at this time, both school-based and community-based mentoring programs can be good investments for youth development programming funds.

Key Differences Between School-Based and Community-Based Models

Some of the differences we observed between school-based and community-based programs will be important for funders and practitioners to consider as they determine how to invest funds and how to design future mentoring programs. These differences include the following:

- School-based programs tend to focus more on youth's school success and serve more youth with academic needs.
- School-based programs also tend to require a less intensive commitment from volunteers.
- School-based programs tend to attract more volunteers who are younger and older than mentors in community-based programs, who are primarily 22 to 49 years of age. School-based programs have also been more successful in attracting minority volunteers.
- Pairs in community-based programs are more likely to be similar in terms of gender, ethnicity and interests than are those in school-based programs.

A school-based approach to providing disadvantaged youth with volunteer mentors provides a promising complement to the traditional community-based model.

- School-based programs tend to cost less per participant than do community-based programs, in part because they rely more heavily on in-kind contributions from the school district to support program operations.

Thus, practitioners and funders who are primarily interested in serving youth with school-related needs, who are interested in attracting youth and elder mentors, and who have limited funds, might consider implementing school-based mentoring rather than a traditional community-based model. Yet, the impacts of school-based programs are not clear. We know from previous research that well-implemented community-based programs yield a wide range of benefits for youth. However, we do not know whether these benefits may also be realized in school-based programs. In the absence of impact data we can only speculate about the likely benefits for youth in school-based mentoring programs.

In addition to school-based programs, there are other place-based mentoring models that were not explored in our analyses and that practitioners and funders may want to consider. Most predominantly, a number of recently developed programs are located at the volunteers' place of employment. Workplace-based programs may resemble school-based programs in terms of lower costs, but are likely to focus more on the career development and job readiness skills that may be of more interest to high school students (who are less likely than younger youth to participate in either school-based or traditional community-based programs). Group mentoring models, which match one or more mentors with a group of youth, may also provide a cost-effective way of providing additional youth with mentors. Before funders invest heavily in these alternative models, however, research that examines relationship development and characteristics of program infrastructure that support matches within these settings, similar to the research on community-based and school-based programs reported here, needs to be conducted.

Within any given community, the best strategy may be to support multiple mentoring programs of different types. With a range of programs to choose from, mentors and youth can be referred to those most appropriate to their needs, schedules and interests.

Fostering Positive Relationships

As the data presented in this report demonstrate, both school-based and community-based programs can provide settings in which mentors and youth develop close and supportive relationships. These relationships, however, do not simply happen. The findings we report here are consistent with those of earlier research, indicating that the mentor's approach to developing a relationship is important, and that staff can facilitate relationship development through the implementation of specific program practices:

- Training and support of mentors and matches are critical. Mentors who receive more than six hours of prematch training and orientation tend to spend more time with their mentees and report having the closest, most supportive relationships whereas those who receive less than two hours of training report having the least close and supportive relationships. Similarly, mentors who report having at least monthly contact with program staff once their matches had begun tend to develop closer and more supportive relationships than those with less frequent contact. This is true regardless of whether mentors and youth are in community-based or school-based programs.

- Having interests in common is an important factor in the mentor's ability to develop a close and supportive relationship with youth, suggesting that program staff need to consider youth's and volunteers' interests during the matching process. Consistent with previous research, however, our analysis found very little difference in the degree of closeness and supportiveness between same-gender and cross-gender matches and between same-ethnic and cross-ethnic matches.

The most critical question facing the field is whether youth who participate in school-based programs derive benefits similar to those observed for youth in community-based programs.

- Mentors working with older youth report less close, supportive relationships than do those working with younger youth. Older youth are less likely to share similar interests with their mentors, suggesting that programs may need to focus more attention on training and supporting mentors working with older youth.

- Finally, spending time engaging in social activities in addition to academic activities is valuable. It is important for mentoring program staff to understand, and to help school personnel understand, that youth can benefit academically simply from having an adult pay attention to and spend time with them; time together is not wasted if every minute is not spent on making sure youth complete their homework.

Areas for Future Research

This research has shed new light on the nature of school-based programs and the similarities and differences between this newer type of mentoring and traditional community-based programs. Our findings have also raised a number of questions worthy of further exploration.

Benefits

Probably the most critical question now facing the field is whether youth who participate in school-based programs derive benefits similar to those observed for youth in community-based programs. Based on our finding that many mentors in school-based programs develop close, supportive relationships with youth, we would expect that youth in school-based programs also benefit from their participation. But do the many differences between SB and CB program models have implications for the type and magnitude of benefits for youth?

Community-based programs are typically characterized by broad youth development goals in contrast to the more specific goals, centered around school success, that typify school-based programs. We know that well-implemented community-based programs result in a wide range of benefits for youth, including reduced substance use, improved academic performance and behavior and improved relationships with parents and peers. Can we expect school-based programs to produce a similar range of impacts? Or, given the focus of these programs, are the benefits likely to be centered around academic outcomes? If benefits are limited to improvements in academic performance and behavior, is the magnitude of these impacts greater than those observed for community-based mentoring? Alternatively, do programs that focus on academic activities to the exclusion of social activities have less impact, even on academic outcomes? The answers to these questions will have important implications for practitioners and funders making decisions about the type of mentoring model to implement and invest in, and are critical areas for future research.

Relationship-Building

Although this research, as well as previous studies, documents associations between important features of mentoring programs and the quality of mentoring relationships that develop, our findings do not help us understand some of the underlying processes at work. For example, we found that shared interests between mentors and youth and the inclusion of social activities are important for the development of close and supportive relationships. How do shared interests and participation in social activities translate into closer relationships? These questions are particularly important given earlier findings that mentors and youth in both effective and ineffective relationships tend to engage in similar types of activities (Morrow and Styles, 1995). What are interactions between mentors and youth like when they are engaging in social activities? Are these interactions different when mentors and youth are focused on goal-oriented tasks? Are specific types of social activities more conducive to relationship development than are others? Are shared interests important because they help matches identify social activities that both parties would enjoy? Or do shared interests simply make it easier for mentors and youth to find things to

talk about? More research is also necessary to determine the interactive effects of academic and social activities on outcomes. Addressing these questions requires an intensive qualitative study that examines the nature of social activities and how they are different from other types of activities mentors and youth engage in together.

Training and Support

The current research found that mentors who receive at least six hours of prematch training develop closer relationships than do those who receive less, particularly those who receive less than two hours of training. But beyond the *amount* of training, we do not know much about the *type* of training that makes a difference. Earlier research found that programs include a wide range of topics in their training and to date, we have not been able to identify what topics are most important to cover in prematch training.

Similarly, the data consistently support the importance of regular, at least monthly, contact between program staff and mentors. But less is known about what type of support mentors find most helpful. Is it sufficient to simply check in with mentors to ensure they are meeting with youth as expected? Or should mentors regularly seek out program staff for advice on how to proceed in their relationship? Do mentors find periodic training throughout the life of a match helpful? What ongoing training topics are most useful? Or is the provision of an opportunity for mentors to meet together as a group sufficient? What, if any, are the advantages to mentors of having ready access to program staff or school personnel in the context of a school-based program? Would these programs still be successful without the close supervision afforded by their place-based nature? Would community-based mentors benefit from more in-person contact with program staff?

Again, in-depth research that focuses on understanding training and support issues would help program staff make better-informed decisions about how to structure their mentoring programs. In designing prematch training, staff select from among a wide range of topics. Currently, they make those decisions based on their own intuition and experience and each program selects a unique set of topics. Research that identifies the most important topics to cover would facilitate this decision-making process and move the mentoring field closer to having a complete set of best practices guiding program implementation.

Institutional Relationships

One aspect of school-based mentoring programs that has not been explored to date is the nature of the relationship between the mentoring agency and the school. We know very little about how these partnerships are developed and how they affect the quality of the mentoring program. Is program quality different depending on how the partnership was initiated? Are schools that initiate partnerships with mentoring agencies more committed to the program than when the reverse is true? What role does each institution play in determining the nature and content of the mentoring program? Does the quality of programming vary depending on whether on-site coordination and supervision is the responsibility of program staff or school personnel? If the school takes responsibility for on-site coordination, does it maintain the program parameters established by the mentoring agency? How do disagreements in terms of goals, philosophy and standards for implementation affect program quality?

Group Mentoring

Virtually all the research conducted on mentoring to date, including the findings presented here, has focused on one-on-one mentoring relationships. Group mentoring programs, both within and outside the school context, also represent an area of growth over the past several years. Among the 722 programs we surveyed as part of

the Mentoring School-Age Children research project, about 21 percent were serving at least some of their participants through group models. Many of the same questions that have been addressed in the context of one-on-one mentoring still need to be explored for group models.

Just as we needed to understand whether mentors and youth develop meaningful relationships within the context of school-based mentoring before moving to a study of program impacts, we now need to examine the process of relationship development in group programs. Are the program infrastructure characteristics that have proven important for one-on-one relationships also important in group models? Or are there other factors that are more important? How does meeting with a mentor as part of a group of youth affect the development of supportive relationships? Do mentors who work with multiple youth feel as close to and supportive of youth as those who mentor only one youth? Do youth develop supportive relationships with other group members as well as with the mentor(s)?

The research we began with the current project and are continuing over the next year will begin to address some of these questions about group mentoring.

Implications

In summary, the Mentoring School-Age Children research has provided information that sheds light on the range and nature of mentoring programs, while at the same time raising additional questions that need to be addressed. Mentoring programs continue to develop and grow, serving millions of disadvantaged youth. Programmatic mentoring can, and does, take many forms, not all of which are fully understood. As programs grapple with issues of cost and a finite supply of volunteers, they continue to search for ways to streamline processes and package mentoring services without sacrificing the quality of relationships that develop between mentors and youth. Among the alternatives to traditional community-based mentoring, school-based programs are very promising.

Lest staff rush to develop new school-based programs at the expense of traditional models, however, it is important to remember that this report focuses on relationship development, not program impacts. We believe that these are important results; the development of positive, supportive relationships is requisite for mentoring to produce significant benefits for youth. Rigorous impact studies are costly; thus it was important to establish the viability of alternative mentoring models before undertaking an expensive evaluation focused on determining program impacts. Given the findings reported here and the push toward serving increasing numbers of youth through school-based models, a systematic evaluation of program impacts is not only warranted but is now imperative if mentoring is to continue its growth as an important strategy within the youth development field.

School-based models include features that make them more attractive to some volunteers and may better meet the needs of particular youth. But school-based programs may not be appropriate for youth with needs that extend beyond the focus of these programs or for volunteers requiring less structure to be successful. Assuming that results from an impact study corroborate our current findings in support of school-based mentoring, we would encourage communities and agencies to move in the direction of offering youth and volunteers a range of mentoring alternatives from which to choose.

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Endnotes

1. Although these budgets are based on annual figures, programs reported the number of youth served on the day of the program survey. On average, the current number of youth served comprises about two-thirds of the annual number served (Fountain and Arbreton, 1999). Therefore, we estimated the annual number of youth by multiplying the current number by three-halves.

2. This additional cost per youth assumes a $35,000 salary including benefits in a program serving 135 youth, the average number of youth served by a SB program in our sample.

3. The analyses conducted for this chapter begin to isolate whether and how time spent together, program infrastructure, matching characteristics, mentor and youth characteristics, and program type (i.e., CB or SB) are associated with relationship quality—assuming that all other aspects of program experience are the same. Further, the analyses were conducted in a way that allows us to examine whether differences in how mentors spend their time can partially or wholly explain why differences emerge in the extent to which mentors report closeness and supportiveness in their relationships with youth. (All measures included in the analyses and specific analytic techniques are described in Appendix B.) Finally, our analyses also compare critical levels for CB and SB programs to test whether threshold levels differ for the two program models.

4. Only those factors related to relationship outcomes at $p<.05$ or better are reported.

5. Before discussing the eight factors and related benchmarks, it is important to note how the current analyses should be interpreted and incorporated with other findings in this report. In the second chapter, we showed that four of the factors that are critical to positive relationship development are also more consistently integrated into CB programs than SB programs (namely, engaging in social activities, involving youth in decision-making, spending more time with youth, and sharing similar interests). Therefore, one implication of the findings that will be presented in the third chapter is that if SB programs increase levels of these factors, then levels of closeness might also increase to be comparable to, or greater than, levels of closeness in CB programs. However, these findings should not imply that *only* SB programs should strive to improve these factors. Community-based programs would also benefit from achieving these benchmarks (and not all CB programs do). Further, despite their differences on these programming and operational factors, we learned that mentors in CB and SB programs are identical in reported levels of emotional and instrumental supportiveness. That they have these positive relationships in spite of existing differences could signify the potential for SB programs to surpass CB programs on these other two relationship measures, if SB programs were similar to CB programs in levels of these critical factors. Ultimately, the message is that both types of programs have room to benefit from improvement or adherence to the critical levels of these key factors, as will be described throughout the remainder of the chapter.

6. This analysis contrasted each of the different match combinations. In SB programs, 77 percent of the matches were same-sex, 20 percent matched a female with a male youth, and 3 percent matched a male mentor with a female youth; corresponding frequencies in CB programs were 89 percent, 10 percent and one percent respectively. There was one exception: Female mentors matched with male mentees felt *more* emotionally supportive than did male mentors matched with male youth.

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Appendix A
The Public Policy Council of The National Mentoring Partnership

The National Mentoring Partnership's Public Policy Council is the public advocacy voice of the nation's youth mentoring movement. Its mission is to assure greater support for quality mentoring by federal, state, and local government, and to expand the favorable attention given mentoring by the public policy community.

Convened and staffed by The National Mentoring Partnership, the council comprises more than 40 institutional friends of youth mentoring and 23 statewide mentoring initiatives—each of whom is dedicated to increasing dramatically the number of young Americans within meaningful mentoring relationships.

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Chair, Public Policy Council
Mentor Consulting Group

Dr. Andrew Mecca
Vice Chair, Public Policy Council
California Mentor Foundation

Suzanne Smith
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Paige Cassidy
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Appendix B
Methodology

Data Sources

Using a structured telephone interview with mentors sampled from school-based and community-based mentoring programs, we collected information on mentors' relationships with youth. These data were collected to allow us to describe the mentors, their mentees, the training and support they access from the mentoring program, the amount of time they spend together, where they meet, the activities they engage in and how they decide on those activities. The data were also gathered to allow us to assess what level of closeness, and instrumental and emotional supportiveness, mentors experience in their relationship with their mentee. Program data on screening, length of commitment, number of youth and mentors served and cost were gathered from program staff with the intent of comparing school-based with community-based programs. The measures and instruments are described in more detail in the following sections.

Mentor Information

From April to November of 1998, 25-minute interviews with mentors were conducted by Response Analysis, a survey research firm. The interview sample was developed through a multistage sampling design. In the first stage, we selected 145 mentoring programs from among the 722 that had completed a program survey as part of the first phase of the project. The sample of programs was drawn, accounting for several key program characteristics to ensure variation in these characteristics within the final sample. Specifically, mentoring programs were stratified along four dimensions: one-on-one vs. group matches; level of program infrastructure (i.e., little, some, a lot); the age mix of mentors (i.e., youth only, elder only, no age restrictions); and whether or not the program specifies the activities pursued by mentors and youth.

The selected programs were asked to provide a list of their current mentors along with contact information. We obtained information from 98 of the selected programs. The survey firm randomly selected mentors from each program's list, contacted them and requested that they complete a telephone interview about their experiences in the mentoring program. Many of these programs provided us with a list containing the names and contact information for all mentors who were currently matched with youth. In those cases, Response Analysis used simple random sampling to select mentors from this list to be interviewed. Other programs, with a large number of mentors, randomly selected a subsample and provided contact information only for that subsample. In a few cases, programs were uncomfortable providing names and contact information without first receiving permission from the mentors to release this information. These programs provided contact information for mentors who agreed to participate in the survey.

Mentors were contacted by the phone interviewers or, in the case of three programs, were given 800 numbers to contact the survey firm. Of the 1,101 mentors who were interviewed, this study focuses on the 669 mentors who are involved either in one-on-one community-based programs (346 mentors from 29 programs) or one-on-one school-based programs (323 mentors from 35 programs).

Measuring youth outcomes was not in the scope of this study. Instead, our focus was on the extent to which mentors and youth are developing close and supportive relationships—interim indicators that matches will be strong enough to have intended benefits for youth. Examples of the items that constitute measures of each of the three relationship outcomes, their response sets and reliability coefficients are presented in Table B1.

The survey also includes questions about mentor demographic characteristics (age, gender, income level, ethnicity), youth demographics and risk characteristics (age, living in poverty, academic risk, held back, juvenile delinquent), program infrastructure variables (how much contact the mentor has with program staff, pre- and postmatch training) and matching variables (same interests, same gender, same ethnicity). Measures of how much time they spend together, what they do and how they decide on activities are presented in Table B1.

Program Information

P/PV, in consultation with The National Mentoring Partnership's Public Policy Council, developed the program interviews. The interviews with program staff focused on detailing program goals, characteristics of activities and program practices believed to be both directly and indirectly related to the program's ability to develop strong mentoring relationships. In developing these interviews, we drew from *Mentoring: Elements of Effective Practice* as well as P/PV's and others' research on standards in mentoring. *Mentoring School-Age Children: A Classification of Programs* provides a classification of programs based on the program variables for 722 programs (see Sipe and Roder, 1999).

Information from program interviews and mentor surveys was used to develop program variables. Prematch training and orientation, postmatch training and support, and matching variables were taken from the mentor survey. Measures of required commitment, screening and whether the program is school-based or community-based (i.e., no programmatically established meeting place) were taken from the program survey.

Prematch Orientation or Training

Mentors were asked how much mentor orientation or training they received from the program before they started meeting with their mentee, and were given four response options: none, less than two hours, between two and six hours, and more than six hours.

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Table B1
Item by Construct List with Sample Items, Response Sets and Reliability Coefficients

Emotional Support (5 items, alpha = .58)
- How much do you agree or disagree that as a mentor you are someone who shows [youth's name] you are always there for [him/her]?
- How much do you agree or disagree that as a mentor you are someone who shows [youth's name] you care about what happens to [him/her]?
  1 Strongly disagree
  2 Somewhat disagree
  3 Somewhat agree
  4 Strongly agree

Instrumental Support (12 items, alpha = .84)
- How much do you agree or disagree that as a mentor you are someone who helps [youth's name] feel [he/she] can take a chance at doing something new or different?
- How much do you agree or disagree that as a mentor you are someone who helps [youth's name] improve at some particular skill?
  1 Strongly disagree
  2 Somewhat disagree
  3 Somewhat agree
  4 Strongly agree

Closeness (1 item)
- How close do you feel to [youth's name]?
  1 Not close at all
  2 Not very close
  3 Somewhat close
  4 Very close

Social Activities (5 items, alpha = .69)
- Thinking about all the time you spend with [youth's name], how much of your time together do you spend doing social activities, like having lunch together?
- Thinking about all the time you spend with [youth's name], how much of your time together do you spend just hanging out?
  1 None at all
  2 A little
  3 Some
  4 A lot

Academic Activities (1 item)
- Thinking about all the time you spend with [youth's name], how much of your time together do you spend working on academics or doing homework?
  1 None at all
  2 A little
  3 Some
  4 A lot

Time Spent Together (1 item)
- In the last month, how many hours did you meet with [youth's name], face-to-face as a mentor?
  Number of hours was recorded

Postmatch Training and Mentor Support

The mentor training and support variable was developed by combining variables representing the frequency of contact between program staff and mentors and the amount of postmatch training the mentor received. Mentors were given a score of low, medium or high:

- Mentors with low mentor support have less than monthly contact with program staff, and receive no postmatch training.
- Mentors with a medium level of support either have more than two hours of training after the match has been made or at least monthly contact with program staff.
- Mentors classified as high on support have at least two hours of postmatch training and a minimum of monthly contact with program staff.

Matching

Three separate matching variables were created, based on whether the mentor responded "yes" or "no" to questions asking if he or she were matched with a youth who shared the same gender, same ethnic background and same interests.

Required Commitment

This program variable is comprised of the duration of commitment mentors are required to make to the program and how frequently mentors are expected to meet with youth:

- Programs classified as "short-term nonintensive" require mentors to commit to being a mentor for less than 12 months and to meet with youth less frequently than weekly.
- Programs defined as "short-term intensive" require a commitment of less than a year with weekly or more frequent meetings with youth.
- Programs classified as "long-term" require mentors to commit to the program for a year or longer and have variable requirements for how frequently mentors and youth meet.

Screening

The screening variable divides programs into three groups:

- Those classified as "low" on screening use fewer than three of the four major screening techniques.
- Programs with "medium" screening use three or four of the primary screening techniques.
- Programs classified as "high" on screening use more than four screening techniques.

Base

Program staff were asked whether the mentors typically met in one specified place. If "yes" and if the place was a school, the program was classified as school-based. Community-based program staff indicated that there was no specific location for meetings (although some mentors always chose to meet at the youth's or mentor's home).

Site Visits

In addition to conducting telephone interviews with mentors and administering program surveys, we selected a small number of programs for site visits. We attempted to select exemplary programs representing different mentoring models based on the classification of programs developed during the first phase of the work on this project (see Sipe and Roder, 1999). Programs with low levels of infrastructure were eliminated first because past research suggests that programs without some minimal infrastructure are generally not successful in fostering positive relationships among a majority of youth and mentors and thus could not be considered "exemplary" programs. Among the remaining programs, we examined mentors' responses to a number of questions, such as their satisfaction with the program and the extent to which mentoring has been a positive experience for them. We also considered how close mentors reported feeling to their mentees and whether or not they felt they have had an impact on youth's behavior and/or academic performance. In addition, we tried to visit a set of programs that varied in terms of their program goals, the population of youth they serve, the population of mentors they recruit and, for site-based programs, where the mentoring occurs.

Fourteen programs were visited for one to two days in Spring 1999. Eight of these were one-on-one community-based or school-based programs. Data from those eight visits are examined in this study. A list of the programs is shown in Table B2.

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Table B2
Mentoring Program Site Visits by Type

Program Type	*Program Name and Location*
One-on-One School-Based Programs	BBBS South High/Heyl Elementary, Columbus, OH
	Foster Grandparent Program, Caro, MI
	Foster Grandparent Program, Richmond, VA
	Going to Bat for Tulsa Kids, Tulsa, OK
	Thumb Area BBBS, Caro, MI
One-on-One Community-Based Programs	Across Ages, Philadelphia, PA
	BBBS of the Alleghenies, Cumberland, MD
	Compeer, Rochester, NY

During these visits, we interviewed program staff to obtain a better understanding of each program's goals, screening and training processes, and the level of support they provide to their mentors. We also asked staff about their matching procedures and how they assess the success and failure of the matches they make. In addition to interviewing program staff, we conducted focus groups with youth participating in each program. The discussion focused on youth's perceptions of the program, their relationship with their mentor, what they like and do not like about both the program and their mentor, and what, if any, benefits they believe they are getting from their participation.

Analysis Strategy

LISREL and regression analyses were used to assess how a youth's and mentor's demographic characteristics, match characteristics, program infrastructure variables, time spent together and activities were related to the three dependent variables representing measures of relationship development, as well as to assess whether differences among program types (i.e., school-based or community-based) could be fully explained by these characteristics.

In general, the multivariate model used to estimate these relationships took the following form:

$$(1)\ Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + \ldots b_{15}X_{15} + e$$

where:
- Y = value of dependent variable
- X = value of explanatory variable
- a, b = coefficients
- e = a stochastic disturbance term with a mean of zero and a constant variance

The 24 explanatory variables (X) included in the model were:

Demographics and characteristics of mentor and youth
- Gender of mentor
- Mentor age group (21 or under, 22 - 49, 50 or over)
- Mentor ethnicity
- Mentor SES
- Grade of youth (elementary, middle school, high school)
- Gender of youth
- Youth held back (yes = 1, no = 0)
- Youth motivated (yes = 1, no = 0)
- Youth from one-parent household (yes = 1, no = 0)

How mentor and youth spend time together
- Hours per month spent together face-to-face
- Engagement in social activities (none, a little, some, a lot)
- Engagement in academic activities (none, a little, some, a lot)
- Engagement in job activities (none, a little, some, a lot)
- Who decides how time is spent (youth, mentoring youth together, mentor, program)
- Time spent on the phone

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Program variables

- Mentor prematch training (none, less than 2 hours, 2 to 6 hours, more than 6 hours)
- Mentor postmatch training and contact with program staff (low, medium, high)
- Screening (low, medium, high)
- Required commitment
- Base (dummy variable representing community- or school-based)
- BBBS (dummy variable representing whether program is BBBS or not)
- Gender match (yes = 1, no = 0)
- Ethnicity match (yes = 1, no = 0)
- Interests match (yes = 1, no = 0)

Models assessing the effects of demographic, program and time spent variables were estimated. The time spent variables were examined as potential mediators of the association between the demographic and program variables and the relationship outcome variables.

A two-tailed t-test was used to assess whether each coefficient was statistically not equal to zero. Those estimates not equal to zero at a .05 or better level of significance are considered significant for the purposes of this report.

When significant paths were demonstrated between the predictors and the dependent variables using the LISREL and path analysis, GLM analyses followed. The GLM were used to determine threshold levels of the predictor variables and to examine whether any interactions between program base (i.e., CB or SB) and these predictor variables were significant.

P/PV

Public/Private Ventures is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the effectiveness of social policies, programs and community initiatives, especially as they affect youth and young adults. In carrying out this mission, P/PV works with philanthropies, the public and business sectors, and nonprofit organizations.

We do our work in four basic ways:

- *We develop or identify social policies, strategies and practices that promote individual economic success and citizenship, and stronger families and communities.*
- *We assess the effectiveness of these promising approaches and distill their critical elements and benchmarks, using rigorous field study and research methods.*
- *We mine evaluation results and implementation experiences for their policy and practice implications, and communicate the findings to public and private decision-makers, and to community leaders.*
- *We create and field test the building blocks—model policies, financing approaches, curricula and training materials, communication strategies and learning processes—that are necessary to implement effective approaches more broadly. We then work with leaders of the various sectors to implement these expansion tools, and to improve their usefulness.*

P/PV's staff is composed of policy leaders in various fields; evaluators and researchers in disciplines ranging from economics to ethnography; and experienced practitioners from the nonprofit, public, business and philanthropic sectors.

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